

Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) today introduced bipartisan legislation to repeal a \$500 million giveaway to Amgen that was tucked into the fiscal cliff deal passed by Congress at the end of the year.

"This eleventh-hour, backroom deal confirms the American public's worst suspicions of how Congress operates," Welch said. "As the nation's economy teetered on the edge of a Congressional-created fiscal cliff, lobbyists for a private, for-profit company seized an opportunity to feed at the public trough. Without scrutiny or debate, the American taxpayer was stuck with the \$500 million tab. This special interest provision should have stood on its own merits with an up or down vote. It's no wonder cockroaches and root canals are more popular than Congress."

The provision in question exempts a specific class of drugs from government controls for two years, including the pill Sensipar, used by kidney dialysis patients and made by the biotechnology giant Amgen. The carve-out will cost Medicare nearly \$500 million over two years.

According to the New York Times, Amgen employs 74 Washington lobbyists and was the only company to advocate for the exemption which was added to the fiscal cliff legislation just hours before Congress voted on the package.

Cosponsors of Welch's legislation include Reps. Richard Hanna (R-N.Y.), Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.), and Bruce Braley (D-Iowa).